

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair's top executives, including members of the controlling Smith family, have been big financial supporters of Bush's campaign. In April the company ordered some of its ABC-affiliated stations not to air a "Nightline" segment that featured a reading of the names of U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq. One of those soldiers was my cousin. A Sinclair executive called that broadcast "contrary to the public interest." How was it not contrary to the public interest to ignore the sacrifice my family and other families have been forced to make for no apparent logical reason? How is not contrary to the public interest to ignore the soldiers sacrifice?

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line or one individual's OPINION and less of what we need for our democracy.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. It shows why we need to return to common decency and stop letting the "haves the most" run over the rest of us. Thank you.